



UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
United States Patent and Trademark Office
Address: COMMISSIONER FOR PATENTS
P.O. Box 1450
Alexandria, Virginia 22313-1450
www.uspto.gov

APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
09/922,811	08/07/2001	Francis De Smet	DESM3001/JEK	8897

23364 7590 08/10/2005

BACON & THOMAS, PLLC
625 SLATERS LANE
FOURTH FLOOR
ALEXANDRIA, VA 22314

EXAMINER

TRUONG, CAM Y T

ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
----------	--------------

2162

DATE MAILED: 08/10/2005

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary

Application No.

09/922,811

Applicant(s)

SMET, FRANCIS DE

Examiner

Cam Y T. Truong

Art Unit

2162

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 20 July 2005.
- 2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-4,6-8,10 and 12-16 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-4,6-8,10 and 12-16 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).
- * See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- 1) ☒ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
- 2) ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
- 3) ☐ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____
- 4) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____
- 5) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
- 6) ☐ Other: _____

DETAILED ACTION

1. Applicant has amended claim 1 and canceled claims 5, 9, 11 and 12 in the amendment filed on 7/20/2005.

Claims 1-4, 6-8, 10, 13-16 are pending in this Office Action.

Response to Arguments

2. Applicant's arguments with respect to claims 1-4, 6-8, 10 and 13-16 have been considered but are moot in view of the new ground(s) of rejection.

Applicant argued that there is no connection between a requestor and a searcher to formulate a request.

In response to applicant's argument, Goedken teaches in response to a message from a first information requester 12 asking (How do bats see in the dark?) as a first version, and information custodian 14 may include the question synonym (How do bats use radar?) as a second version. In particular, the information custodian 14 may amend the question segment 28 and/or he may include a question synonym segment to facilitate subsequent automatic and/or manual retrievals. Clearly, there is a connection between the requestor 12 and custodian 14 for reformulating the question of the requester 12 after receiving the question of the requester 12. The amended question is represented as an adapted information request (figs. 5&6, col. 20, lines 36-39; col. 32, lines 55-58),

For the above reason, examiner believed that rejection of the last office action was proper.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

3. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

4. Claims 1, 2, 3, 6, 7, 8, 10, 13 and 16 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Goedken (US 6393423) in view of Busey et al (or hereinafter "Busey") (US 6377944) and Szlam et al (or hereinafter "Szlam") (US 5594791).

As to claim 1, Goedken teaches a method for searching information on the Internet (col. 21, lines 45-47) comprising:

"providing a computer linked to the Internet" as (fig. 10);

"accessing at least one search assistant via the computer linked to the Internet to search for information on the Internet" as the database manager 140, which includes a search engine associated with the portal 144, is responsive to information request 18 from a searcher or a user to search the knowledge database 136 for a reply to the information request 18. If the database manager 140 is unsuccessful in its search, the selector 110 of the apparatus 10 could be activated to initiate a search for an information custodian 14 that can reply to the information 18. To answer this request, information custodians 14 are preferably authorized to search the knowledge database 136 for pre-existing answer on the

Art Unit: 2162

Internet. For example, after Dr_McWilliams indirectly receives the information request 18 of a user 12, the Dr_McWilliams provides an answer to the user indirectly. The above information shows that the information custodian 14 or Dr_McWilliam helps the user when searching information on the Internet. The custodian 14 is represented as one search assistant (figs. 4-8& 10, col. 21, lines 64-67; col. 22, lines 1-7; col. 20, lines 20-24),

"wherein the at least one search assistant is human and specialist in searching on the Internet" as from time to time an information request message 18 will be routed to an information custodian 14 even though an answer to that information request exists in the database 136. To address this issue, information custodians 14 are preferably authorized to search the knowledge database 136 for pre-existing answers. If the custodian 14 finds such an answer, he/she is preferably authorized to add at least a portion of the current information request message 18 to the knowledge database 136 as a synonym of the previously stored request, and to prompt the database manager 140 to initiate the preparation of a final answer message 24 comprising the previously stored answer" (see col. 20, lines 20-30). In addition, "a information custodian 14 may wish to limit the answer request messages 20 he receives to those where a novice level reply is expected " (see col. 27, line, 39-41).

Clearly, the information custodian 14 is a human who is referred to as "he/she".

In particularly, Goedken teaches that whenever an information request 18 from a requester 12 is received by the apparatus 10, the database manager 140 conducts a search of the knowledge database to find an answer for responding to the information request 18 from the requester 12. If the database manager 140 cannot retrieve an answer from a database 136, the information request 18 is passed to the selector 10 to initiate the preparation of an answer request message 20 to be routed to one or more information custodian 14. To address this issue, information custodians 14 are search knowledge database 136. If the custodian 14 finds an answer, he/she prompts the answer to the database manager to initiate the preparation of a final answer message 24 for subsequent routing to the information requestor 12 (col. 19, lines 34-67; col. 20, lines 1-30).

As seen above information, the information custodian assists the requestor 12 in searching to find an answer by searching the database 136. Thus, the information custodian is specialize in searching and can assist with searching;

“wherein the human search assistant reformulates a first information request of the user into an adapted information request associated with the first information request” as in response to a message from a first information requester 12 asking (How do bats see in the dark?) as a first version, and information custodian 14 may include the question synonym (How do bats use radar?) as a second version. In particular, the information custodian 14 may amend the question segment 28 and/or he may include a question synonym

segment to facilitate subsequent automatic and/or manual retrievals. The above information shows that the custodian 14 reformulates the question of the requester 12 after receiving the question of the requester 12. The amended question is represented as an adapted information request (figs. 5&6, col. 20, lines 36-39; col. 32, lines 55-58),

"applies the adapted information request on at least one search robot for accessing information related to the first information request" as after receiving the question 18 of the user 12, the information custodian 14 may amend the question segment 28 and/or he may include a question synonym segment to facilitate subsequent automatic and/or manual retrievals and search an answer in the knowledge database 136. The knowledge database 136 is stored in a portal 144 that includes a first type of search engine 148. This search engine is typically responsive to a query received from a searcher to search for web sites having addresses on the Internet. If the custodian 14 finds such an answer, he/she is authorized to prompt the database manager 140 to initiate the preparation of a final answer message 24. For example, after receiving a question from user name John_Doe indirectly, the custodian 14 or Dr_McWilliams provides an answer including a web site that contains more information. The above information shows that the custodian 14 applies the amended question to the search engine 148 for accessing information in the knowledge database 136; thus, the custodian 14 or Dr_McWilliams can provide an answer to the user John_Doe indirectly (figs. 4-8&10, col.32, lines 55-58; col.

20, lines 25-31). Applicant defined that "search robot" means "search program which can scour the Internet in searching of the requested information" (page 1, lines 26-28). The search engine is a program that searches for keywords in a database (Computer Dictionary, page 424, col. Right, lines 30-33). Thus, the search engine 148 is represented as the search robot.

Goedken does not explicitly teach the claimed limitation "conducting a dialogue between the user and the human search assistant on line and in real time; and using one or more head human search assistants having below them a number of specialized adjunct human search assistants who each is specialized in one or more fields, the head human search assistant directing a call the head human search assistant receives towards one of those specialized adjunct human search assistants".

Busey teaches the claimed limitations:

"conducting a dialogue between the user and the human search assistant on line and in real time" as the CIU manages the physical communications channels between customers and agents. The CIU module provides real-time text discussion, or chat, with multimedia extensions allowing agents and customers to interact immediately to solve a particular problem. The CIU also provides a number of interfaces to extension modules, including computer-telephony integration (allowing customers to request a telephone call-back) and H.323 (i.e., "voice packet," or "packet over IP") to PBX integration. The latter function allows agents to speak with a customer via their telephone handset,

while the customer uses an Internet phone (H.323 compliant software) on their end of the connection (col. 7, lines 5-18);

“using one or more head human search assistants having below them a number of specialized adjunct human search assistants who each is specialized in one or more fields” as an agent supervisor or administrator can set the default handling mechanism--allowing a customer to browse a list of matches or to forward the existing, but insufficient, match to an agent for resolution. If, for example, a display of a list of matches is the default, the system executes step 318 to show the list. Else step 316 is performed to create an online task and to invoke the WebACD as discussed below. The customer can be allowed to reformulate the question before escalation to the WebACD, as desired. The customer can be provided with a check box, button or other web page control asking whether the answer is satisfactory. The above information shows that the agent supervisor to supervise the user for consulting (col. 10, lines 36-52).

Szlam teaches the claimed limitation “the head human search assistant directing a call the head human search assistant receives towards one of those specialized adjunct human search assistants” as the system administrator must manually select which agents are to be assigned to different campaigns. Each campaign is related to a call (col. 9, lines 10-20; col. 9, lines 35-62; col. 10, lines 55-60).

It would have been obvious to a person of an ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to apply Busey’s teaching of providing real-time text

discussion, or chat, with multimedia extensions allowing agents and customers to interact immediately to solve a particular problem and an agent supervisor or administrator can set the default handling mechanism--allowing a customer to browse a list of matches or to forward the existing, but insufficient, match to an agent for resolution and Szlam's teaching of the system administrator must manually select which agents are to be assigned to different campaigns to Goedken's system in order to assign agents to calls which need the special skills of those agents accurately for assisting a user in searching/retrieving websites via Internet and further allow agents to solve user's particular problem immediately.

As to claim 2, Goedken teaches the claimed limitation "wherein the human search assistant assists the user by searching on the Internet and indicates to the user where the information the user is looking for can be found in the World Wide Web or where the user should be looking on the World Wide Web or giving the user information found in the World Wide Web" as Dr_McWilliams helps John_Doe by searching on internet and indicates a web site <http://www.bats.com/sonar> for more information (figs. 4-8 & 10, col. 20, lines 20-25; col. 20, lines 36-40).

As to claim 3, Goedken teaches the claimed limitation "wherein the human search assistant has such expertise in searching on the Internet that the assistant can be considered a web librarian" as individuals, who have the expertise to quickly provide thorough, responsive and accurate information, is directed information request. Often time a person exists who knows where to locate and/or has custody of the information that interests a searcher. For example, if the searcher wants to know how bats see in the dark, a zoologist with a specialty in bats could very likely recommend a web page on point and/or answer that question precisely and concisely in a matter of moments. A human expert or a zoologist is represented as a search assistant who is human and a specialist. The human expert or a zoologist is considered as web librarian (col. 1, lines 41-51; col. 8, lines 36-38), "is able to give more information than the place to look on the World Wide Web" as (fig.8).

Goedken does not explicitly teach the claimed limitation "is able to supervise the user consulting the Internet". Busey teaches assuming that a customer does not obtain an appropriate answer to his query then step 312 is performed so that a human agent can be used to resolve the query. For example, an inappropriate response may be where a query returns either no match or a large number of possible matches. An agent supervisor or administrator can set the default handling mechanism--allowing a customer to browse a list of matches or to forward the existing, but insufficient, match to an agent for resolution. If, for example, a display of a list of matches is the default,

the system executes step 318 to show the list. Else step 316 is performed to create an online task and to invoke the WebACD as discussed below. The customer can be allowed to reformulate the question before escalation to the WebACD, as desired. The customer can be provided with a check box, button or other web page control asking whether the answer is satisfactory. The above information shows that the agent supervisor to supervise the user for consulting (col. 10, lines 36-52).

It would have been obvious to a person of an ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to apply Busey's teaching of assuming that a customer does not obtain an appropriate answer to his query then step 312 is performed so that a human agent can be used to resolve the query to Goedken's system in order to assist a user to improve searching/retrieving websites via Internet and further allow agents to solve user's particular problem immediately.

As to claim 6, Goedken discloses the claimed limitation subject matter in claim 5, except the claimed limitation "including using voice recognition via the Internet to carry out the user's communication with the human search assistant".

Busey teaches an agent and customer communicate via a communication type that can be easily recorded, such as chat, the CIU can record the entire transcript (or a portion) of the dialogue and transfer the transcript to the WebACD

for storing and future reference. Other communication types can be recorded, also, such as voice or IP voice. This can be accomplished by audio recording, by speech recognition, etc. Speech recognition is represented as voice recognition (col. 8, lines 18-26).

It would have been obvious to a person of an ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to apply Busey's teaching of an agent and customer communicate via a communication type and using speech recognition to Goedken's system in order to recognize user's voice or vocabularies as spoken by users for helping users in searching information on the Internet efficiently.

As to claim 7, Goedken discloses the claimed limitation subject matter in claim 1, except the claimed limitation "including offering the user a visual representation of the human search assistant". Busey teaches when a customer receives an unsatisfactory answer, or no answer, a dialog box is provided where users can choose to (4) be queued for an online agent. The (4) be queued for an online agent is a visual representation of the human agent (col. 12, lines 64-67; col. 13, lines 1-2).

It would have been obvious to a person of an ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to apply Busey's teaching of when a customer receives an unsatisfactory answer, or no answer, a dialog box is provided where users can choose to (4) be queued for an online agent to Goedken's system in

order to directly contact with an agent for assisting a user searching information on the Internet and further save time searching information on Internet.

As to claim 8, Goedken discloses the claimed limitation subject matter in claim 1, except the claimed limitation "including consulting the human search assistant via a device selected from the group consisting of: a mobile phone, a palmtop, and an interactive television apparatus or the set-top box associated therewith". Busey teaches a palmtop device (col. 5, lines 45-50).

It would have been obvious to a person of an ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to apply Busey's teaching of a palmtop device to Goedken's system in order to provide wider flexibility and greater capability and provide a portable personal device for storing information when traveling.

As to claim 10, Goedken discloses the claimed limitation subject matter in claim 9, except the claimed limitation " enabling additional contact of the same search assistant by the user by means of voice recognition, iris recognition or fingerprint recognition".

Busey teaches an agent and customer communicate via a communication type that can be easily recorded, such as chat, the CIU can record the entire transcript (or a portion) of the dialogue and transfer the transcript to the WebACD for storing and future reference. Other communication types can be recorded, also, such as voice or IP voice. This can be accomplished by audio recording, by

speech recognition, etc. Speech recognition is represented as voice recognition (col. 8, lines 18-26).

It would have been obvious to a person of an ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to apply Busey's teaching of speech recognition to Goedken's system in order to recognize user's voice or vocabularies as spoken by users for helping users in searching information on the Internet efficiently.

As to claim 13, Goedken teaches the claimed limitation "wherein the human search assistant assists the user when searching for services" as information custodian 14 can reply or assist a user indirectly when the user wants to search websites via Internet. Websites are represented services (col. 21, lines 43-50; col. 22, lines 1-8).

As to claim 16, Goedken teaches the claimed limitation "including communicating with the user in the user's own language, with or without simultaneous translation" as when Dr_McWilliams receives a question: How do bats see in the darks in English language indirectly from John Doe via email, the Dr_McWilliams answers this question in English language. The above information shows that John Doe is served in his own language without simultaneous translation (figs. 4-8).

5. Claim 4 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Goedken (US 6393423) in view of Busey and Szlam and further in view of Hoffman (US 6366906).

As to claim 4, Goedken discloses the claimed limitation subject matter in claimed 1, except the claimed limitation "wherein the human search assistant makes use of search engines for searching on the Internet". Hoffman teaches that a user can select all provided search engines to search information on Internet (col. 8, lines 56-58; col. 10, lines 39-43, fig. 1).

It would have been obvious to a person of an ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to apply Hoffman's teaching of the user can select all provided search engines to search information on the Internet to Goedken's system in order to allow human agents to specify search engines for finding specific information related to a user defined search term efficiently.

6. Claims 14 and 15 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Goedken (US 6393423) in view of Busey and Szlam and further in view of Ng (US 6405175).

As to claim 14, Goedken discloses the claimed limitation subject matter in claim 13, except the claimed limitation "wherein said services comprise on-line shopping, price and product comparison".

Ng teaches Internet shopping is powerful not only because of the lower prices found. Many product reviews are posted on the Internet. The user can

read such product reviews at magazine review site 22. Some online malls 16 link shoppers to these product-specific reviews, allowing shopper to compare products as well as prices (col. 2, lines 38-42).

It would have been obvious to a person of an ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to apply Ng's teaching of the user can read product reviews at magazine review site and allowing shopper to compare products as well as prices to Goedken's system in order to allow users to find online products with lower prices and further save user's money when shopping online.

As to claim 15, Goeken discloses the claimed limitation subject matter in claim 1, except the claimed limitation "wherein the human search assistant composes programs for the user comprising films, television or radio or music programs which are provided via the Internet". Goedken teaches a human assistant such as Dr_McWilliams helps a user in searching information on Internet. Dr_McWilliams provides a webpage corresponding to the received question from a user (figs. 4-8). Ng teaches users could post information about site to download movies (col. 14, lines 37-38).

It would have been obvious to a person of an ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to apply Ng's teaching of downloading movies on the Internet to Goedken's system in order to provide relevance movies based on user's requests to a user quickly.

7. Claims 1, 2, 3, 6, 7, 8, 10, 13 and 16 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Goedken (US 6393423) in view of Busey et al (or hereinafter "Busey") (US 6377944) and Pickering et al (or hereinafter "Pickering") (US 6493695).

As to claim 1, Goedken teaches a method for searching information on the Internet (col. 21, lines 45-47) comprising:

"providing a computer linked to the Internet" as (fig. 10);

"accessing at least one search assistant via the computer linked to the Internet to search for information on the Internet" as the database manger 140, which includes a search engine associated with the portal 144, is responsive to information request 18 from a searcher or a user to search the knowledge database 136 for a reply to the information request 18. If the database manger 140 is unsuccessful in its search, the selector 110 of the apparatus 10 could be activated to initiate a search for an information custodian 14 that can rely to the information 18. To answer this request, information custodians 14 are preferably authorized to search the knowledge database 136 for pre-existing answer on the Internet. For example, after Dr_McWilliams indirectly receives the information request 18 of a user 12, the Dr_McWilliams provides an answer to the user indirectly. The above information shows that the information custodian 14 or Dr_McWilliam helps the user when searching information on the Internet. The

custodian 14 is represented as one search assistant (figs. 4-8& 10, col. 21, lines 64-67; col. 22, lines 1-7; col. 20, lines 20-24),

“wherein the at least one search assistant is human and specialist in searching on the Internet” as from time to time an information request message 18 will be routed to an information custodian 14 even though an answer to that information request exists in the database 136. To address this issue, information custodians 14 are preferably authorized to search the knowledge database 136 for pre-existing answers. If the custodian 14 finds such an answer, he/she is preferably authorized to add at least a portion of the current information request message 18 to the knowledge database 136 as a synonym of the previously stored request, and to prompt the database manager 140 to initiate the preparation of a final answer message 24 comprising the previously stored answer” (see col. 20, lines 20-30). In addition, “a information custodian 14 may wish to limit the answer request messages 20 he receives to those where a novice level reply is expected ” (see col. 27, line, 39-41).

Clearly, the information custodian 14 is a human who is referred to as “he/she”.

In particularly, Goedken teaches that whenever an information request 18 from a requester 12 is received by the apparatus 10, the database manager 140 conducts a search of the knowledge database to find an answer for responding to the information request 18 from the requester 12. If the database manager 140 cannot retrieve an answer from a database 136, the information request 18

is passed to the selector 10 to initiate the preparation of an answer request message 20 to be routed to one or more information custodian 14. To address this issue, information custodians 14 are search knowledge database 136. If the custodian 14 finds an answer, he/she prompts the answer to the database manager to initiate the preparation of a final answer message 24 for subsequent routing to the information requestor 12 (col. 19, lines 34-67; col. 20, lines 1-30).

As seen above information, the information custodian assists the requestor 12 in searching to find an answer by searching the database 136. Thus, the information custodian is specialize in searching and can assist with searching;

“wherein the human search assistant reformulates a first information request of the user into an adapted information request associated with the first information request” as in response to a message from a first information requester 12 asking (How do bats see in the dark?) as a first version, and information custodian 14 may include the question synonym (How do bats use radar?) as a second version. In particular, the information custodian 14 may amend the question segment 28 and/or he may include a question synonym segment to facilitate subsequent automatic and/or manual retrievals. The above information shows that the custodian 14 reformulates the question of the requester 12 after receiving the question of the requester 12. The amended question is represented as an adapted information request (figs. 5&6, col. 20, lines 36-39; col. 32, lines 55-58),

"applies the adapted information request on at least one search robot for accessing information related to the first information request" as after receiving the question 18 of the user 12, the information custodian 14 may amend the question segment 28 and/or he may include a question synonym segment to facilitate subsequent automatic and/or manual retrievals and search an answer in the knowledge database 136. The knowledge database 136 is stored in a portal 144 that includes a first type of search engine 148. This search engine is typically responsive to a query received from a searcher to search for web sites having addresses on the Internet. If the custodian 14 finds such an answer, he/she is authorized to prompt the database manager 140 to initiate the preparation of a final answer message 24. For example, after receiving a question from user name John_Doe indirectly, the custodian 14 or Dr_McWilliams provides an answer including a web site that contains more information. The above information shows that the custodian 14 applies the amended question to the search engine 148 for accessing information in the knowledge database 136; thus, the custodian 14 or Dr_McWilliams can provide an answer to the user John_Doe indirectly (figs. 4-8&10, col.32, lines 55-58; col. 20, lines 25-31). Applicant defined that "search robot" means "search program which can scour the Internet in searching of the requested information" (page 1, lines 26-28). The search engine is a program that searches for keywords in a database (Computer Dictionary, page 424, col. Right, lines 30-33). Thus, the search engine 148 is represented as the search robot.

Goedken does not explicitly teach the claimed limitation "conducting a dialogue between the user and the human search assistant on line and in real time; and using one or more head human search assistants having below them a number of specialized adjunct human search assistants who each is specialized in one or more fields, the head human search assistant directing a call the head human search assistant receives towards one of those specialized adjunct human search assistants".

Busey teaches the claimed limitations:

"conducting a dialogue between the user and the human search assistant on line and in real time" as the CIU manages the physical communications channels between customers and agents. The CIU module provides real-time text discussion, or chat, with multimedia extensions allowing agents and customers to interact immediately to solve a particular problem. The CIU also provides a number of interfaces to extension modules, including computer-telephony integration (allowing customers to request a telephone call-back) and H.323 (i.e., "voice packet," or "packet over IP") to PBX integration. The latter function allows agents to speak with a customer via their telephone handset, while the customer uses an Internet phone (H.323 compliant software) on their end of the connection (col. 7, lines 5-18);

"using one or more head human search assistants having below them a number of specialized adjunct human search assistants who each is specialized in one or more fields" as an agent supervisor or administrator can set the default

handling mechanism--allowing a customer to browse a list of matches or to forward the existing, but insufficient, match to an agent for resolution. If, for example, a display of a list of matches is the default, the system executes step 318 to show the list. Else step 316 is performed to create an online task and to invoke the WebACD as discussed below. The customer can be allowed to reformulate the question before escalation to the WebACD, as desired. The customer can be provided with a check box, button or other web page control asking whether the answer is satisfactory. The above information shows that the agent supervisor to supervise the user for consulting (col. 10, lines 36-52).

Pickering teaches the claimed limitation "the head human search assistant directing a call the head human search assistant receives towards one of those specialized adjunct human search assistants" as the call center administrator may assign tasks or work to one or more selected agents 226 (or to all of them) by inserting an interaction 214 into the call center workflow. The interaction 214 may include a task or job to be performed by one or more agents 226. Such a task may be related to customer interactions or may be entirely independent thereof. The agents, who initially handle calls or tasks, will answer customer's question. The above information shows that the call center administrator has below her a list of agents who are specialized in one or more field to answer customers' questions. Agents are represented as human search assistants. The call center administrator is represented as a head human search assistant (col. 10, lines 1-7; col. 9, lines 49-51; col. 5, lines 11-13).

It would have been obvious to a person of an ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to apply Busey's teaching of providing real-time text discussion, or chat, with multimedia extensions allowing agents and customers to interact immediately to solve a particular problem and an agent supervisor or administrator can set the default handling mechanism--allowing a customer to browse a list of matches or to forward the existing, but insufficient, match to an agent for resolution and Pickering's teaching of the call center administrator assigns tasks to one or more selected agents by inserting an interaction 214 into the call center workflow to allow agents who answer questions of customer to Goedken's system in order to to handle all user communications in a homogeneous or flexible manner for helping a user to search information on the internet and further allow agents to solve user's particular problem immediately.

As to claim 2, Goedken teaches the claimed limitation "wherein the human search assistant assists the user by searching on the Internet and indicates to the user where the information the user is looking for can be found in the World Wide Web or where the user should be looking on the World Wide Web or giving the user information found in the World Wide Web" as Dr_McWilliams helps John_Doe by searching on internet and indicates a web site <http://www.bats.com/sonar> for more information (figs. 4-8 &10, col. 20, lines 20-25; col. 20, lines 36-40).

As to claim 3, Goedken teaches the claimed limitation "wherein the human search assistant has such expertise in searching on the Internet that the assistant can be considered a web librarian" as individuals, who have the expertise to quickly provide thorough, responsive and accurate information, is directed information request. Often time a person exists who knows where to locate and/or has custody of the information that interests a searcher. For example, if the searcher wants to know how bats see in the dark, a zoologist with a specialty in bats could very likely recommend a web page on point and/or answer that question precisely and concisely in a matter of moments. A human expert or a zoologist is represented as a search assistant who is human and a specialist. The human expert or a zoologist is considered as web librarian (col. 1, lines 41-51; col. 8, lines 36-38), "is able to give more information than the place to look on the World Wide Web" as (fig.8).

Goedken does not explicitly teach the claimed limitation "is able to supervise the user consulting the Internet". Busey teaches assuming that a customer does not obtain an appropriate answer to his query then step 312 is performed so that a human agent can be used to resolve the query. For example, an inappropriate response may be where a query returns either no match or a large number of possible matches. An agent supervisor or administrator can set the default handling mechanism--allowing a customer to browse a list of matches or to forward the existing, but insufficient, match to an

agent for resolution. If, for example, a display of a list of matches is the default, the system executes step 318 to show the list. Else step 316 is performed to create an online task and to invoke the WebACD as discussed below. The customer can be allowed to reformulate the question before escalation to the WebACD, as desired. The customer can be provided with a check box, button or other web page control asking whether the answer is satisfactory. The above information shows that the agent supervisor to supervise the user for consulting (col. 10, lines 36-52).

It would have been obvious to a person of an ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to apply Busey's teaching of assuming that a customer does not obtain an appropriate answer to his query then step 312 is performed so that a human agent can be used to resolve the query to Goedken's system in order to assist a user to improve searching/retrieving websites via Internet and further allow agents to solve user's particular problem immediately.

As to claim 6, Goedken discloses the claimed limitation subject matter in claim 5, except the claimed limitation "including using voice recognition via the Internet to carry out the user's communication with the human search assistant".

Busey teaches an agent and customer communicate via a communication type that can be easily recorded, such as chat, the CIU can record the entire transcript (or a portion) of the dialogue and transfer the transcript to the WebACD

for storing and future reference. Other communication types can be recorded, also, such as voice or IP voice. This can be accomplished by audio recording, by speech recognition, etc. Speech recognition is represented as voice recognition (col. 8, lines 18-26).

It would have been obvious to a person of an ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to apply Busey's teaching of an agent and customer communicate via a communication type and using speech recognition to Goedken's system in order to recognize user's voice or vocabularies as spoken by users for helping users in searching information on the Internet efficiently.

As to claim 7, Goedken discloses the claimed limitation subject matter in claim 1, except the claimed limitation "including offering the user a visual representation of the human search assistant". Busey teaches when a customer receives an unsatisfactory answer, or no answer, a dialog box is provided where users can choose to (4) be queued for an online agent. The (4) be queued for an online agent is a visual representation of the human agent (col. 12, lines 64-67; col. 13, lines 1-2).

It would have been obvious to a person of an ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to apply Busey's teaching of when a customer receives an unsatisfactory answer, or no answer, a dialog box is provided where users can choose to (4) be queued for an online agent to Goedken's system in

order to directly contact with an agent for assisting a user searching information on the Internet and further save time searching information on Internet.

As to claim 8, Goedken discloses the claimed limitation subject matter in claim 1, except the claimed limitation "including consulting the human search assistant via a device selected from the group consisting of: a mobile phone, a palmtop, and an interactive television apparatus or the set-top box associated therewith". Busey teaches a palmtop device (col. 5, lines 45-50).

It would have been obvious to a person of an ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to apply Busey's teaching of a palmtop device to Goedken's system in order to provide wider flexibility and greater capability and provide a portable personal device for storing information when traveling.

As to claim 10, Goedken discloses the claimed limitation subject matter in claim 9, except the claimed limitation " enabling additional contact of the same search assistant by the user by means of voice recognition, iris recognition or fingerprint recognition".

Busey teaches an agent and customer communicate via a communication type that can be easily recorded, such as chat, the CIU can record the entire transcript (or a portion) of the dialogue and transfer the transcript to the WebACD for storing and future reference. Other communication types can be recorded, also, such as voice or IP voice. This can be accomplished by audio recording, by

speech recognition, etc. Speech recognition is represented as voice recognition (col. 8, lines 18-26).

It would have been obvious to a person of an ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to apply Busey's teaching of speech recognition to Goedken's system in order to recognize user's voice or vocabularies as spoken by users for helping users in searching information on the Internet efficiently.

As to claim 13, Goedken teaches the claimed limitation "wherein the human search assistant assists the user when searching for services" as information custodian 14 can reply or assist a user indirectly when the user wants to search websites via Internet. Websites are represented services (col. 21, lines 43-50; col. 22, lines 1-8).

As to claim 16, Goedken teaches the claimed limitation "including communicating with the user in the user's own language, with or without simultaneous translation" as when Dr_McWilliams receives a question: How do bats see in the darks in English language indirectly from John Doe via email, the Dr_McWilliams answers this question in English language. The above information shows that John Doe is served in his own language without simultaneous translation (figs. 4-8).

8. Claim 4 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Goedken (US 6393423) in view of Busey and Pickering and further in view of Hoffman (US 6366906).

As to claim 4, Goedken discloses the claimed limitation subject matter in claimed 1, except the claimed limitation "wherein the human search assistant makes use of search engines for searching on the Internet". Hoffman teaches that a user can select all provided search engines to search information on Internet (col. 8, lines 56-58; col. 10, lines 39-43, fig. 1).

It would have been obvious to a person of an ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to apply Hoffman's teaching of the user can select all provided search engines to search information on the Internet to Goedken's system in order to allow human agents to specify search engines for finding specific information related to a user defined search term efficiently.

9. Claims 14 and 15 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Goedken (US 6393423) in view of Busey and Pickering and further in view of Ng (US 6405175).

As to claim 14, Goedken discloses the claimed limitation subject matter in claim 13, except the claimed limitation "wherein said services comprise on-line shopping, price and product comparison".

Ng teaches Internet shopping is powerful not only because of the lower prices found. Many product reviews are posted on the Internet. The user can

read such product reviews at magazine review site 22. Some online malls 16 link shoppers to these product-specific reviews, allowing shopper to compare products as well as prices (col. 2, lines 38-42).

It would have been obvious to a person of an ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to apply Ng's teaching of the user can read product reviews at magazine review site and allowing shopper to compare products as well as prices to Goedken's system in order to allow users to find online products with lower prices and further save user's money when shopping online.

As to claim 15, Goeken discloses the claimed limitation subject matter in claim 1, except the claimed limitation "wherein the human search assistant composes programs for the user comprising films, television or radio or music programs which are provided via the Internet". Goedken teaches a human assistant such as Dr_McWilliams helps a user in searching information on Internet. Dr_McWilliams provides a webpage corresponding to the received question from a user (figs. 4-8). Ng teaches users could post information about site to download movies (col. 14, lines 37-38).

It would have been obvious to a person of an ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to apply Ng's teaching of downloading movies on the Internet to Goedken's system in order to provide relevance movies based on user's requests to a user quickly.

Conclusion

11. The prior art made of record and not relied upon is considered pertinent to applicant's disclosure.

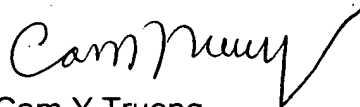
McFarlane et al (US 6453038).

Contact Information

12. Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Cam Y T Truong whose telephone number is (571) 272-4042. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday to Friday.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, John Breene can be reached on (571) 272-4107. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 703-872-9306.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).



Cam-Y Truong
Patent Examiner
Art Unit 2162
8/5/2005